

Verbena incompta

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledons other than Composites

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Plants annual or short-lived perennial, taprooted or with ligneous fibrous roots. **Stems** erect, 100–200 cm, scabrous to hispid or hispid-hirsute, eglandular. Leaves persistent, ovate to ovatelanceolate, oblong-elliptic, or obovate, basally subclasping and subcordate, midstem blades (3–)5–10 cm x 10–35 mm, veins impressed adaxially, hispid-hirsute on both surfaces or strigose-hirsute adaxially, margins coarsely serrate; petioles absent. **Spikes** in 3s, forming compound cymes, the central mostly sessile on peduncles 0(–3) mm, inflorescence aspect corymbiform, comprising relatively compact and distinct clusters and subclusters, central and laterals dense and thick in fruit, (6–)10–40(–55) mm x 4–6 mm; floral bracts ovate to lanceolate or narrowly lanceolate, keeled, 3–4 mm, slightly longer than the calyces or equal, margins ciliate. **Calyces** 2.5–3.5 mm, strigose to strigose-hirsute, eglandular, lobes connivent. **Corollas** purple to red-purple, violet, or white, tubes 2.5–4 mm, limbs 3.5–5.5 mm in diam. **Nutlets** 1–1.2 (–1.4) mm, commissural faces extending to very tip of nutlets, densely bullate.

SIMILAR TAXA

Distinguished from the similar *V. bonariensis* by the shortly exerted, narrow corollas, longer flower spikes and broader leaves - generally a much more robust plant.

For further detail on the delination of this species see the factsheet for *V. bonariensis*.

DISTRIBUTION

Kermadec Islands. North Island: Common to abundant north of the central North Island Volcanic Plateau as well as on the East Coast; south of this becoming generally uncommon. **South Island:** common in lowland areas in Nelson and Marlborough; rare and very local further south to Otago.

Introduced in Central America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Pacific Islands (Fiji, Norfolk Island, Papua New Guinea), Australia.

HABITAT

Verbena incompta is a xenophyte of a range of habitats, all mostly open and modified, including roadsides, waste places, farmland and near settlements. The powdery mildew *Podosphaera xanthii* is commonly seen on *V. incompta* in New Zealand.

GENUS

Verbena

FAMILY

Verbenaceae

AUTHORITY

P.W. Michael



Whangārei Heads, Northland. Photographer: Marley Ford, Date taken: 11/02/2024, Licence: CC BY.



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SYNONYMS

Verbena bonariensis var. *brevibracteata* Kuntze

ORIGIN

Native to South America

NVS CODE

VERINC

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Ford M. (2022). *Verbena incompta* P.W.Michael: an overlooked name for an old weed in New Zealand. *New Zealand Journal of Botany*: 1–11. (Published online: 23 May 2022)

Nesom G.L. (2010). Taxonomic notes on *Verbena bonariensis* (Verbenaceae) and related species in the USA. *Phytoneuron* 12: 1–16.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared by Marley Ford (5 March 2022). Brief description and Distribution sections are copied from Nesom (2010).

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/verbena-incompta/>

PDF DATE

07 June 2026